

Book Reviews: Raising a Modern-Day Knight

August 13, 2008

***Raising a Modern-Day Knight: A Father's Role in Guiding His Son to Authentic Manhood* by Robert Lewis (Focus)**

As I began reading this book, my initial reaction was negative. Robert Lewis obviously was portraying knighthood in a fashion drawn more from Hollywood movies than research in the area.

It wasn't long, however, until I gave him a mulligan on that one and listened to his more important points. I finally decided that if he wants to use a romanticized notion of knighthood, I could deal with that because he also is saying a lot of things that need saying. Lewis' premise is that boys have no idea what a man is. That resonated.

I also like his principles of manhood: A real man rejects passivity, accepts responsibility, leads courageously and expects the greater reward.

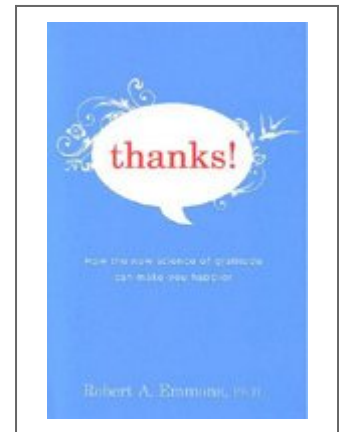
Even more appealing to me is his assertion regarding the absolute importance of ceremonies that mark key life passages in ways that make them memorable for a lifetime. While I am proud of the men my sons have grown to be—even without benefit of this book—I can see how memorable ceremonies would have been advantageous in their lives.

Overall, this is a book with enough insights in it to be worth the time of any father, but especially of boys ages 10 to 12.

George Henson, staff writer

Baptist Standard, Dallas

Thanks! How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier
by Robert A. Emmons (Houghton Mifflin)



We all could use a little help giving “thanks to the Lord in all circumstances.” Thanks! documents observable benefits of practicing gratitude and gives tips on how to develop a more grateful lifestyle. Robert Emmons, a scholar in the positive psychology movement, has done extensive research on the cultivation and effects of gratitude. He presents his findings in this practical little book.

Lightweight and easy to read, Emmons’ book avoids too-technical examples from research but never dilutes the science. He tested the effects of gratitude by asking people to engage in activities that practice thanks, like keeping a “gratitude journal.” He gauged participants’ overall levels of happiness during and after the experiments.

Unsurprisingly, Emmons found grateful people are generally happier. They enjoy longer lifespans, lower blood pressure and closer friendships. But most people find it difficult to be thankful all the time. Emmons’ chapter on ingratitude explores reasons why it’s easier for some and harder for others to give thanks. He also lists some ways to integrate the practice of

gratitude in daily life.

Emmons takes an awkwardly nonbiased stance toward religion, making sure in each section on religion to mention several major faiths. He spotlights many examples of grateful living motivated by religion to illuminate one of the most common contexts for thanksgiving.

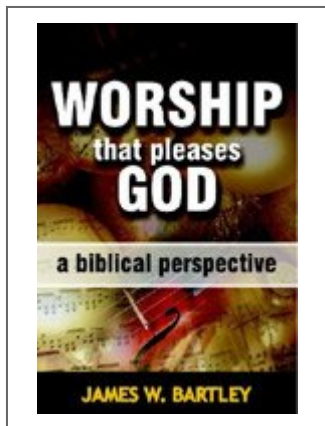
Although Thanks! is not geared for a Christian audience, its lessons on practicing gratitude could benefit anyone on the Christian walk.

Carrie Joynton,

communications intern

Baptist Standard, Dallas

***Worship That Pleases God: A Biblical Perspective* by James W. Bartley (Baal Hamon Publishers)**



This helpful book provides insights into the nature of Christian worship. The text reflects the constant and judicious perspective of a mature and careful student of Scripture with years of experience leading churches in an intercultural setting.

The book is recommended to all whose concern for Christian worship leads

them to review how worship is treated throughout the Bible. The book rarely if ever moves away from exegetical insights that can be clearly traced back to the biblical texts that support them.

As the reader turns the pages, one walks from book to book through the Bible to follow James Bartley's guided tour of the way worship is described in text after biblical text.

Worship That Pleases God will bless and enrich worship leaders, pastors, seminary students and other students of Scripture who aspire to align their worship of God to fall in line with clear biblical teaching. The organization of the book follows exegetically the sequence of the Bible, with helpful commentary on relevant texts to the theme of worship. Years of faithful service as a missionary to Uruguay and the mature insight of a cautious and judicious student of Scripture support the author's conclusions.

We must be grateful to Bartley for providing us with the fruit of his labors—reflecting insight from years of study—to bring out biblical principles on the worship that pleases God.

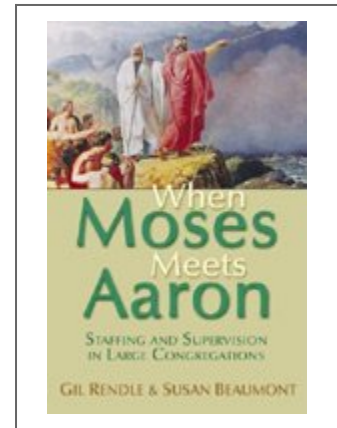
Bob Garrett, director

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***When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Larger Church Congregations* by Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont (Alban Institute)**



Laypeople serving on personnel committees need this book. Pastors need this book. Church business administrators whose seminary education failed to teach them the basics of human resource management need this book. Even seasoned church administrators who have MBAs and who have achieved certification and leadership status in the National Association of Church Business Administration need this book—at least to share with their churches' pastoral teams and personnel committee members.

Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont provide the best resource I have encountered to teach “Human Resources 101 for Churches.” While this subtitle points to its focus on large churches, most of the book will be useful in small churches as well.

Three beginning chapters demonstrate the rationale for churches utilizing established personnel practices.

However, the focus of the book is on practical, how-to steps for implementing the practices. Each focused chapter shares sound models, templates and samples. These are illustrated with frequent, interesting case studies of common scenarios in churches.

Topics include job descriptions, hiring practices, supervisory practices, performance evaluations, organizational charts, staff meetings, disciplinary procedures, termination practices and employment files.

The authors even include counsel on how to discuss difficult employment issues with the congregation.

This book offers an immediate resource for most personnel issues that in churches. Indeed, I plan to keep this book at the ready and refer to it often.

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